

Importance of Life Skills for Adolescents during Education Period

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Abstract

Adolescence is a transition period of development and adolescents are considered as the productive members of a society. Now day's adolescents are becoming individuals who are less motivated and are engaging in antisocial activities and spoiling their valuable life. Adolescence is a period when the intellectual, physical and all the capabilities are very high but their antisocial activities and behavior are deteriorating all the capabilities and they are becoming a burden to the society. Life skill education aims to provide adolescents with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. Life skill facilitates a complete and integrated development of individuals to function effectively as social being. Developing life skill helps adolescents in translating knowledge; attitude and values in to healthy behavior that makes their life fruitful with life skill adolescent make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises.

Keywords: abilities, Adolescence, attitude, curriculum, Life skill, problems, relationships, society

Introduction

Life skills are abilities that help you face life problems with ease and confidence. They refer to a multiplicity of psycho-social and interpersonal competencies that consist of bundles of habits. Life skills help adolescents make informed decisions, communicate effectively, develop coping and management skills to lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills such as self-esteem, self-awareness, assertiveness, coping with stress, coping with emotions, etc. can enable you to understand yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, your character and personality, and your values and principles. Your awareness about your positive points can enable you to make the most of your strengths and eliminate your weaknesses. As a result, in course time, you will be able to learn better and gradually move towards excellence. Similarly, life skills like effective communication, interpersonal relationships, empathy and conflict resolution help you understand others and get along with them amicably. Some other life skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making and problem solving help you deal with issues and problems that you face in your life. Life skills, therefore, are very important for an individual. In spite of this, so far no serious efforts are being made to teach these skills to students. Even though we teach them a number of cognitive skills, life skills are yet to find their way into our class-room teaching. The World Health Organization has recognized its importance 37 and efforts and is already afoot to teach these skills to the adolescents in schools. It has helped some state governments and a number of teachers have been trained to infuse these skills with the curriculum that already exists. In course of time, it is hoped that our students will be equipped with these skills. Once students develop these skills, they will not only know themselves and get along amicably with others, but also handle the problems and issues they face in their day-to-day life.

“The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”

- WHO (19997)

“ Life skills based education is, - Behavior change or behavior development approach,- designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills.

- UNICEF (2001)

Early identification of problems, early intervention and support at key moments in lives of young people in vital.

Development needs and aspirations of the individuals.

Development of psychosocial abilities.

To enhance capabilities and enlarge choices.

To build different dimensions of well-being, by building self image and self worth, which in turn help individuals to be less vulnerable to the variations within a given context.(vulnerability Is the probability of having one's situation when facing a dramatic event.)

Life skill education is applicable for all ages of children and adolescents in school. However, the age group targeted is mainly 10-18, adolescent years, since young people of this age group seem to be most vulnerable to behavior related health problems. Thus adolescent needs life skills education more.

Contemporary world, the world in which we live, is a world of violence where what is focused is diversity and not unity. There is constant strife in societies of the world in the name of religion, caste, ideals, etc. Individuals and groups are found involved in perpetual battle against one another for power, wealth and status. With better means of communication and transportation, mobility of people from one part of the world to other parts has become a trend. As a result, the world is fast becoming a melting pot of races, cultures, religions and ideas. It may so happen that the family that lives next to you may be a Punjabi, Bengalee or a Tamilian. We cannot build walls between us and our neighbors and live a secluded life. In case we keep on developing biases and prejudices, and keep on waging private battles, against one another, there is little scope for growth and progress. In a pluralist country like India which is a socialist democratic republic involved in building up an egalitarian society, where peace and serenity prevail we have to give up sectarian tendencies and learn to live together. Learning to live together is the foundation stone of democratic living. Some of the life skills that can help us learn to live together are effective communication, interpersonal relationships (managing peer relationships), empathy negotiation, and conflict resolution. Mastering these skills is important as they will help you in a big way in managing peer relationships. Attaining proficiency in these skills is also important for your future life. They will help you, as an adult to get along with others amicably and live a life of collaboration and synergy.

Adolescence, a vital stage of growth and development, marks the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is characterized by rapid physiological changes and psychosocial maturation. Adolescence is also the stage when young people extend their relationship beyond parents and family and are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world in general. Most crucial stage of life with peak intelligence and stamina. It is Time for Achievement, Deciding professions, Developing personality, Emotional instability, Wishing only good for others ,but often end up doing, due to Lack of self-control, Lots of societal, parental and peer pressure.

Experimentation and risk-taking

Giving in to negative pressure

Taking uninformed decisions on crucial issues, especially relating to their bodies.

Turning point in one's life, a period of increased potential but also one of greater vulnerability.

Their Sexuality.

Life Skills Education

Life skill Education is a value added program which aims to provide adolescents with strategies to make healthy choices that contributes to a meaningful life. It helps adolescents to understand their self and to assess their skills, abilities and areas of development. It also helps adolescents to get along with other people and adjust with their environment and making responsible decision.

The main objective of life skill education id to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. Life skill education is a basic learning need for all individuals. Skills like responsibility, communication, self esteem, interpersonal skills etc. extend its maximum level, if it is practicing effectively. We need to create life skill education as the cornerstone of various youth programmers and an integral part of our formal education process.

Life skills are abilities that enable adolescents to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life. Adolescence is a time wherein teenagers go through a lot of physical and emotional changes. Their body begins to grow rapidly in shape and size. They also experience hormone change and sexual maturation. Girls experience menarche and boys, spermarche. All these changes make them uncomfortable. They leave them confused and vulnerable. These pubertal changes affect their self-esteem and they develop poor body image. They become more concerned about how they look rather than what they want to accomplish in their life. If adolescents are equipped with life skills, they will be able to cope with all such situations successfully. You have studied in Unit 9 how adolescents become prone to risky behaviours.

Adolescence is a period of excitement, experimentation, and change. Adolescents are curious and want to experiment several things. They may easily divert their attention into activities such as smoking, using drugs, fighting, and taking laws into their hands. They are also prone to sexual relationships owing either to coercion or peer pressure. Many are pushed into action without giving any thought to consequences. Such individuals can possibly become subject to sexually transmitted infections. They need to learn the importance of saying “no” especially at times to negative peer pressure. They need to learn to take control of their emotions and make informed decisions. In all such situations, life skills surely guide them and place them on the high way to development. Thus, life skills supply adolescents with capacity to deal with effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, etc. are higher order skills. If the students manage to equip themselves with these skills, they will be able to make predictions, make inferences, formulate hypotheses, draw conclusions, make decisions, solve problems, identify assumptions, recognize logical inconsistencies, etc. Self-awareness, for example, is a life skill that can throw ample light on oneself. It can shed light on our emotions, our behaviours, our social competence, our preferences, our goals, etc. Developing interpersonal relations is yet another important life skill. It is a competence that helps us relate to others effectively. In this way each life skill has much to contribute towards making us more effective and efficient. Life skill education, therefore, is something that is unavoidable as far as adolescents are concerned. It will unquestionably place them on the highway to growth and development.

Facing the Challenges

Managing Emotions:- Adolescents have frequent mood change reflecting feelings of anger, sadness, happiness, fear, shame, guilt and love. Very often, they are unable to understand the emotional turmoil.

Developing an identity:- Self-awareness helps adolescents understand themselves and establish their personal identity. Lack of information and skills prevent them from effectively exploring their potential and establishing a positive image and sound career perspective.

Resisting peer Pressure:- Adolescents find it difficult to resist peer pressure. Some of them may yield to these pressure, and engage in experimentation. Aggressive self conduct: irresponsible behavior and substance abuse involve greater risks With regard to physical and mental health. The experiment with smoking and milder drug Can lead to switching over to hard drugs and addiction at a later stage.

Building Relationships:- As a part of growing up, adolescents redefine their relationships with parents, peers and members of the opposite sex. Adults have high expectations from them and do not understand their feelings. Adolescents need social skills for building positive and healthy relationships with others including peer of opposite sex. They need to understand the importance of mutual respect and socially defined boundaries of every relationship.

Communicating and Negotiating safer life situations Education and Career:- Adolescents need social skills for building positive and healthy relationships with others including peer of opposite sex. They need to understand the importance of mutual respect and socially defined boundaries of every

relationship. Sexually active adolescents face greater health risks. Girls may also face mental and emotional problems related to early sexual initiation. Resisting the vulnerability to drug abuse, violence and conflict with law or society.

Core “Life Skills”

Problem-solving	-Decision Making
Critical Thinking	-Creative Thinking
Communication Skills	- Self-Awareness
Stress Management	-Empathy
Interpersonal Relationship	

Benefits of Teaching Life Skills

Imparting life skill education in children and adolescents will bring valuable benefits which include,

Promotion of self esteem, peace education, self confidence

Prevention of antisocial activities and behavior

Helps in the promotion of general well being and primary prevention

Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities and enable individuals to behave in healthy ways, given the desire to do so and given the scope and opportunity to do so.

Results of research studies also prove that life skill education improves the academic performance of individuals. In life skills education, children are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. Different methods to enhance life Skills in adolescents:-

Class discussions

Brainstorming

Role plays

Demonstration and guided practice

Working in small groups and pairs

Story telling

Case studies

Audio-visual Activities like dance, theatre, music, arts

Games and Debates

Conclusion

The adolescents should know “Life Skills” because Empowers them to take positive actions to protect themselves and to promote health and positive social relationships. Utility in other areas like Environment Education, Consumer Education, Peace Education and Social Cultural Issues. Life skill education can serve as a remedy for the problems as it helps the adolescents to lead a better life. Therefore life skill education is a need of the society and every education system should impart life skill education as a part of its curriculum as it is capable of producing positive health behavior, positive interpersonal relationships and well being of individuals. In order to have an effective implementation of life skill education there is a need for professionally trained and skilled personal from within the country.

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